

Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-14

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H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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----- 064887

R 151009 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6915

INFO AMEMBASSY KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 5785

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK, UR, ID

SUBJECT: MOSLEMS PROTEST ANTI- ISLAMIC SOVIET TRACT

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY: SEVERAL INDONESIAN MOSLEM LEADERS HAVE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO BAN A SOVIET BOOK ON ISLAM, " THE HOLY KORAN, ITS NORMS AND THOUGHTS," ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT DISTORTS THE KOREAN AND VIOLATES INDONESIA' S OFFICIAL PANCASILA IDEOLOGY BY PREACHING MARXISM- LENINISM. SOVIET AMBASSADOR KOUZNETSOV, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THEBOOK BY FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK, DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF IT, BUT PROMISED TO INVESTIGATE. MINISTER OF RELIGION MUKTI ALI HAS PROMISED TO BAN THE BOOK, IF AN EXAMINATION OF ITS CONTENTS, ESTABLISHES THAT THE ALLEGATIONS ARE TRUE. THE FOLLOWING IS BASED ON PRESS REPORTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO REPORTS IN THE OFFICIAL ANTARA NEWS BULLETIN AND IN ABADI NUSANTARA, AND MERDEKA MAY 12-15, THE 97-PAGE SOVIET TRACT WAS PUBLISHED BY THE NOVOSTI PRESS IN ARABIC
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UNDER THE TITLE " AL QUR' AN AKIDATUHU WA TAALIMATUHU" AND CIRCULATED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO COINCIDE WITH THE SEASON OF MOHAMMED' S BIRTHDAY. ITS AUTHOR, N. I. MUKHTIDINOV, IS DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK AS A FORMER SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN UZBEKISTAN AND A FORMER SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA.

2. THE REQUESTS FOR BANNING THE BOOK WERE PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS BY HARUN LUKMAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY (A GROUP OF MOSLEM LEADERS WITH STRONG TIES TO THE OLD MASJUMI GROUP AND ITS SHORT- LIVED PARTAI MOSLEM INDONESIA SUCCESSOR) AND FOUR MOSLEM SCHOLARS FROM WEST, CENTRAL AND EAST JAVA AND SULAWESI. THEY COMPLAINED THAT THE BOOK ATTEMPTS TO CREATE DOUBT ABOUT ISLAM BY DESCRIBING THE KOREAN AS A " TOOL OF THE BOURGEOISIE" WHICH CONTAINS INTERNAL INCONSISTENCIES AND BY ALLEGING THAT SCIENCE HAS PROVED THAT MARXISM IS SUPERIOR TO BOTH ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY, AS EVIDENCED BY THE SUCCESSFUL SOVIET MOON FLIGHT. THE MOSLEM DAILY ABADI REPORTED MAY 15 THAT THE FOUR MOSLEM SCHOLARS FROM THE PROVINCES WHO PROTESTED DISTRIBUTION OF THE BOOK HAVE ALSO ASKED THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION TO TAKE STEPS TO PERSUADE THE SOVIET UNION TO CEASE PUBLISHING THE BOOK. IT WAS ALSO REPORTED THAT COPIES OF THE BOOK HAVE BEEN SENT TO MOSLEMS IN JAKARTA FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN KARACHI.

3. MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MUKTI ALI TOLD JOURNALISTS MARCH 14 THAT HIS DEPARTMENT HAD NOT HAD A CHANCE TO EXAMINE THE BOOK, BUT THAT IF THE CHARGES CONCERNING ITS CONTENTS WERE TRUE, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD ASK THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO BAN THE BOOK.

4. ACCORDING TO KOMPAS MAY 15, FOREIGN MINISTER ADAM MALIK ASKED SOVIET AMBASSADOR KOUZNETSOV ABOUT THE BOOK IN A MEETING MAY 14, AND KOUZNETSOV REPLIED THAT HIS EMBASSY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE BOOK, BUT WOULD INVESTIGATE THE MATTER. FOREIGN DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN NANA SUTRESNA LATER SAID THAT IF THE BOOK VIOLATES ISLAMIC TEACHINGS, IT WOULD BE BANNED, AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD RESOLVE " POLITICAL PROBLEMS" CREATED BY ITS DISTRIBUTION IN INDONESIA.
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5. COMMENT: THIS INCIDENT RECALLS A SIMILAR CASE IN 1971 WHEN INDONESIAN MOSLEMS ATTACKED THE CIRCULATION OF AN ANTI-ISLAMIC BOOK, " THE SOVIET UNION AND ISLAM" ALLEGEDLY WRITTEN BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO CEYLON AND ALSO

PUBLISHED BY NOVOSTI. THE SOVIET EMBASSY SUFFERED
CONSIDERABLE ADVERSE PRESS PUBLICITY AS A RESULT OF THAT
INCIDENT, ALTHOUGH IT TWICE DENIED PUBLICLY THAT THE
BOOK WAS AUTHENTIC. THIS LATEST CASE APPEARS ON ITS FACE
TO BE ANOTHER INEPT AND EMBARRASSING GAFFE BY THE SOVIETS
IN VIOLATION OF THE INDONESIAN LAW WHICH PROHIBITS
DISSEMINATION OF ALL MARXIST- LENINIST LITERATURE AND
REQUIRES THAT ALL SOVIET PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTED IN
INDONESIA BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOI FOR ADVANCE CLEARANCE.
ACTION REQUESTED WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION
DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE RECEIVED ON ORIGIN AND CIRCULATION
OF MR. MUKHTIDINOV' S BOOK.
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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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